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GROWING AREA NEWS

Dalco Passage Oil Spill

Early in the morning of October 14th, an oil spill was reported in Dalco Passage north of Tacoma. Estimated at 1,000 gallons, the spill ultimately impacted beaches in King, Kitsap, and Pierce Counties, primarily on Vashon and Maury Islands.

The Coast Guard and the Department of Ecology immediately established a unified command and began hiring response contractors to start clean-up operations. DOH personnel were in contact with the environmental unit of the unified command and determined that intertidal shellfish areas were being impacted. Notifications were made to our partner agencies and Tribes that shellfish closures would be necessary once the extent of the spill was determined.

Commercial shellfish harvesting areas near the spill were closed and a recreational harvest advisory was issued. A press release was developed with Ecology which informed the public that shellfish found in markets and restaurants were harvested from areas unaffected by the spill and were safe to eat.

Clean-up operations progressed rapidly and the end of active clean-up was declared on October 28th. The focus now will be long-term monitoring and evaluation of sediment chemistry data to determine when shellfish harvesting can resume.

DOH appreciates the cooperation of our partners in responding to this unfortunate incident. It underscores the sensitivity of our marine environment and the potential threats it faces. For more information regarding the DOH response to this spill, contact Bill Cleland by e-mail at bill.cleland@doh.wa.gov or phone at (360) 236-3306.

A map of the affected area can be found on our web site at www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/Pubs/dalco-oil-spill.htm



*Photos courtesy of the
Washington State
Department of Ecology*



Stop the Presses! A New PSAMP Report is Coming!



DOH's most recent report on fecal coliform status and trends in Puget Sound will soon be published. The report, produced to support the Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program (PSAMP), describes conditions through the year 2002. Like previous reports, there are short summaries of over 30 growing areas. The format of the summaries has been expanded to include information on the shellfish industry, recreational use, land use in associated uplands, important freshwater sources, and basic rainfall information. To reserve your copy e-mail Tim Determan at tim.determan@doh.wa.gov or call (360) 236-3311.

STAFF CHANGES

A Farewell Message From Jennifer Tebaldi

As many of you already know, I recently made a career change at the Department of Health. Last September, I moved from my position as Director of Food Safety and Shellfish Programs to the Director of Policy and Program Service Development for the Division of Epidemiology, Health Statistics and Public Health Laboratories (I'm still learning to say that without stumbling or taking a breath!)

I was in the Shellfish Program for over eight years and learned a tremendous amount from all of you. As I attended national shellfish meetings, I developed a great appreciation for the cooperative working relationship we have in Washington. I was always proud to share information with other states about our program and the strong emphasis that each of you places on the safety of your shellfish and public health.

I know that the Shellfish Program will continue to be regarded as a national model. The managers and staff in the Program do an excellent job of working with all of you to ensure that the shellfish produced in Washington is of the highest quality. My successor, Nancy Napolilli, will be here in January and she will be a tremendous addition to the program. I've known Nancy for a number of years and she is truly the best person to continue and advance our tradition of excellence!



Nancy Napolilli Selected As New Office Director

Nancy Napolilli steps into her new role as Office Director of DOH's Food Safety and Shellfish Programs in early January 2005. For the past ten years, Nancy has been the Manager of Alaska's Food Safety and Sanitation Program. This

program provides direct services and regulatory oversight regarding retail food, food processing, seafood processing, shellfish, and other public facilities. Like the state of Washington, Alaska is culturally, economically, and environmentally very diverse. Their seafood processing industry is the largest in the nation.



Nancy was raised in Washington where she received a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology and Environmental Health. Although she has spent most of her adult life in Alaska, she is very excited about returning to her home state and working with local health jurisdictions and the shellfish industry. Please join us in welcoming Nancy as our new Office Director!

INSPECTORS' CORNER

Change in Inspection Forms and Computerized Field Inspections

Beginning in January 2005, DOH inspectors will begin using the U.S. FDA plant inspection form to record inspection results. A sample of the form and an explanation of its use can be found at <http://www.issc.org/documents/Plant-ins-form.PDF> or you can request a sample from your inspector.

This change is being made, in part, because the FDA form aligns more closely with the NSSP. It is also driven by the need to replace our aging data system and the FDA form lends itself more readily to automation.

Over the next few months we will be transitioning our data system to newer technology. The new data system will allow inspection information to be accurately recorded in the field using portable computers, and will provide efficiencies in tracking such things as PIP qualifiers (Performance-based Inspection Program, see *Shellfish Connections* December 2003 issue.) The computerized field inspection system is scheduled to be in place by May 2005.

If you have any questions about either the new inspection form or computerized field inspection system, please contact Richard Lillie at richard.lillie@doh.wa.gov or talk to your assigned inspector.

INSPECTORS' CORNER (*continued*)



Country of Origin Labeling

By now, everyone is familiar with the requirement to label shellfish with the country of origin and declare whether it is farm-raised or wild-caught. The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA AMS) published the final rule on country of origin labeling (COOL) on September 30, 2004, the date it was scheduled to take effect. USDA AMS was aware that there would still be product in markets and distribution networks for some time after the rule was enacted, so October 1, 2005 was set for enforcement of the COOL law. In anticipation of the September publication of the final rule, the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC) Executive Board approved a change to the Model Ordinance that would allow COOL labeling requirements to be met. This change will be submitted to Task Force II for consideration at the 2005 ISSC Biennial Meeting.

In general, the ISSC stated that COOL requirements could be met by placing the required "Product of USA" and "farm-raised" or "wild-caught" anywhere on the tag as long as none of the language required by the Model Ordinance was obscured. The FDA has interpreted farm-raised shellfish to be any shellfish that has been harvested from cultivated beds.

The rule is quite easy to read and understand; essentially, label products in any manner that is conspicuous and easily read – even use a check box for method of production if you like. And, finally, don't combine the method of production with either the ingredient statement or the common or usual name of the product: **don't** label your oysters as "farm-raised Pacific oysters" in the product identity line. The rule text can be viewed at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/cool/> (USDA web site). If you have any specific questions, please contact Richard Lillie at richard.lillie@doh.wa.gov or phone (360) 236-3313.

Tagging of Out of State Product Wet Stored in Washington

Any dealer who wet stores shellstock from another state and ships the shellstock as a product of Washington State must have a wet storage operation plan approved by DOH. The plan must describe all tagging changes, assuring that shellstock can be traced to its source (see specific wet storage reference under NSSP Chapter X.05.B(e)). The standard food safety warning is required on the back of the tag, and the front must be indelible, legible, and indicate the following information arranged in specific order as follows:

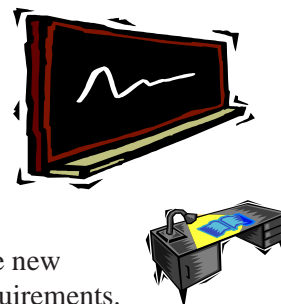
- Dealer's name, address, and certification number and state initials.
- Original operations certification number and state initials
- Harvest date
- Harvest location
- The statement: **"THIS PRODUCT IS A PRODUCT OF (NAME OF STATE) AND WAS WET STORED AT (FACILITY CERTIFICATION NUMBER) FROM (DATE) TO (DATE)"**
- Type and quantity of shellfish

The following statement in BOLD capitalized type: **"THIS TAG IS REQUIRED TO BE ATTACHED UNTIL CONTAINER IS EMPTY OR IS RETAGGED AND THEREAFTER KEPT ON FILE FOR 90 DAYS."**

HACCP Class

The next HACCP class is scheduled for April 21-22, 2005. Class topics have been expanded to include the new country of origin labeling requirements. The class format has also been updated and improved.

A registration form for the April class is included in this newsletter. Hope to see you there!



INSPECTORS' CORNER *(continued)*

Harvest Site Certificate and Tagging Requirements

Shellfish tags and transaction records must include both the growing area name and the harvest site as shown on the Harvest Site Certificate. Companies may designate unique site identifier codes (Site IDs) on their tags as long as they are listed on the Harvest Site Certificate.

The goal is to directly cross-reference shellstock tags to the Harvest Site Certificate. Internal coded bed numbers, names, or other references not listed on the Harvest Site Certificate but used on shellstock tags and other records can obscure product source identification, limiting DOH's ability to quickly respond to product recalls, pollution closures, or biotoxin closures. This can potentially delay interstate shellstock shipments, cause the (perhaps unnecessary) destruction of product with unidentified sources, or cause the closure of an entire growing area instead of a portion of it.

Please make sure the information listed on your tags includes the NSSP growing area name, and at least one of the following specific harvest site identifiers from your Harvest Site Certificate (HSC):

- site ID as listed on your HSC · parcel number · bed number · BIDN
- geoduck tract number · legal owner's last name · DNR lease number

Example of Site ID. These could be numbers, letters, or a combination of both.

Harvest Site Certificate

Company Name: Example Shellfish Company
License End Date: 9/30/2005
License Number: WA-9999-SS

Site ID/ Relay	NSSP Growing Area	Station #	Harvest Site Owner/Address	Site Number	Acres	Cert. Date	Lease Expires	Relay Permit on File	Signed CAAMP on File
	Hood Canal #1	16, 17	John Doe	Parcel: 09865	1.25	1/1/99	12/31/06	N/A	N/A
HC1-A		Beleulah Point							

XYZ SHELLFISH COMPANY
1234 Any Street
Your Town, WA 90000

WA-9999-SS

ORIGINAL SHIPPER'S CERT NO. (if other than above):

HARVEST DATE: 12/28/04

SHIPPING DATE: 12/31/04

HARVEST LOCATION: WA-Hood Canal #1 - Parcel 09865 (or) WA-Hood Canal #1 - HC1-A

TYPE OF SHELLFISH: Pacific Oyster

QUANTITY OF SHELLFISH: 20 BUSHELS COUNT

POUNDS OTHER

THIS TAG IS REQUIRED TO BE ATTACHED UNTIL CONTAINER IS EMPTY AND THEREAFTER KEPT ON FILE FOR 90 DAYS.

TO:

RESHIPPER'S
CERT. NO.

DATE RESHIPPED

Product of USA - Farm-Raised (or) Farm-Raised in USA

*Tag
example*

BIOTOXIN UPDATE

Domoic Acid

Second Quarter 2004

The domoic acid levels in razor clams continued downward for the second quarter of 2004, following the trend from the first quarter 2004. None of the beaches on the coast had a test result above the closure level of 20ppm for the second quarter. These test results allowed two planned razor clam openings at the coast. Long Beach and Twin Harbors had four harvest days in April, and Copalis, Mocrocks, and Kalaloch were open for three days. Twin Harbors and Kalaloch were open for three days of razor clam harvesting in May. Plankton monitoring revealed almost no *Pseudo-nitzschia* cells present in the water for most of the second quarter of 2004, although cell counts began to creep up at Long Beach and Twin Harbors in mid-May. Domoic acid results in Dungeness Crab was so uneventful in the fall of 2003, testing crab for domoic acid was discontinued after December 2003.

Third Quarter 2004

Plankton counts for *Pseudo-nitzschia* began to rise in July, with 608,000 cells/liter recorded at Long Beach. The rise in plankton was quickly followed by a sharp downward trend on the south coast, while north coast counts continued to rise. On July 29, the *Pseudo-nitzschia* plankton count at Kalaloch peaked at 4,782,000 cells/liter. During this event, the razor clams on the south coast beaches showed a slight elevation, but remained at single digit numbers. By August 18, razor clams at Kalaloch rose to unsafe toxin levels of 49ppm, disrupting the fall razor clam season plans, which traditionally opens in October.

In September 2004, for the second year in a row, a domoic acid bloom was detected in the inland waters of Puget Sound. The bloom peaked on September 13, 2004, when a blue mussel sample from Fort Flagler State Park in Jefferson County had a domoic acid level of 13ppm. Domoic acid levels were detected from Port Townsend to Penn Cove on Whidbey Island and as far south as Port Ludlow. However, none of the samples were even close to the 20ppm closure limit. Test results of one part per million or less were also detected at Kingston, Manchester, and Port Orchard in Kitsap County in September 2004.

Commercial Razor Clam Season 2004

The commercial razor clam season for the Willapa Spits opened on May 18, 2004, the traditional opening time, and ran until June 30, 2004. An unprecedented second commercial harvest began on the Spits on July 29, 2004, and ran to August 30, 2004. Over 100,000 pounds of razor clams were harvested from the Spits in 2004, the second highest harvest on record. As part of a scientific study, two more unprecedented commercial openings were held. The Long Beach Razor Clam Reserve was opened from July 1 to July 3, 2004. The Twin Harbors Razor Clam Reserve was opened for two days on September 1 and 2, 2004.

PSP

Second Quarter 2004

PSP toxin continued a downward trend during April, May, and June, with many area closures being lifted or reduced to butter clam-only closures. Only two locations in the state experienced new PSP bloom activity in the second quarter of 2004. The first occurred in North San Juan County, the second closure occurred in North Puget Sound for the area of northern Whatcom County. Washington State commonly opens the PSP season with blooms in this area of Whatcom County. However, the bloom, which began in the third week of May, was short in duration and most of the area was reopened three weeks later. At the end of the second quarter of 2004, new PSP activity was absent in most parts of the state of Washington, following the example of 2002 and 2003. There was only one geoduck closure in the second quarter.

BIOTOXIN UPDATE (*continued*)

Third Quarter 2004

By mid-July, PSP activity began to pick up in the Central Puget Sound Basin, with a closure on Vashon Island in King County. The next day the closure for North San Juan County was lifted. The following week parts of south King County were closed. In the third week of July, the Central Puget Sound bloom expanded in all directions to close all of King County, parts of Pierce and Snohomish Counties, and all of eastern Kitsap County. In the last week of July, the Pierce County closure expanded south to the Thurston County line. There were also new closures in Clallam County affecting the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and in Jefferson County from north of Port Townsend to Port Ludlow. There were more closures in Clallam and Jefferson Counties in August that expanded the Strait of Juan de Fuca closure. September was a mixed bag of openings and additional closures. In the first week, the area south of the Narrows Bridge reopened to all species of shellfish. In the fourth week, parts of Jefferson County, Kitsap County, and Pierce County closed, while parts of King County and Snohomish County reopened to everything except butter clams. On September 30, 2004, Dyes Inlet in Kitsap County reopened to all species. There were fifteen geoduck tract closures in the third quarter of 2004.

For more information, contact Frank Cox at frank.cox@doh.wa.gov or phone (360) 236-3309.

OTHER NEWS

DOH, Local Health, and Volunteers Pitch In to Identify Spread of Invasive Species

In October 2004, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) contacted our office regarding the tunicate species *Didemnum lahillei*. WDFW has confirmed the presence of this highly invasive tunicate in the waters of Puget Sound and requested any sightings be reported to them.

Didemnum lahillei



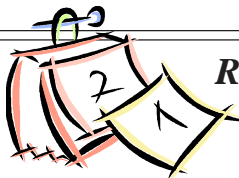
Photo courtesy of USGS
Woods Hole Science Center

The tunicate, a rapid reproducer with no known predators, attaches to any hard surface available and can quickly spread throughout the area. It forms dense mats made of many thousands of individuals, suffocating existing sea life, including clams, mussels, and other native species. Its presence can alter marine habitat and interfere with fishing, aquaculture, and other coastal and offshore activities.

Our Recreational Shellfish Program contacted local health jurisdiction staff and volunteer biotoxin sample collectors and asked them to be alert to the presence of the tunicate, notifying WDFW if any are found. This cooperative surveillance effort will help provide the Department of Fish & Wildlife with the information they need to determine the location and spread of *Didemnum lahillei*.

For more information about the tunicate and associated surveillance activities contact Kim Zabel-Lincoln, Recreational Shellfish Program, at kim.zabel-lincoln@doh.wa.gov or phone (360) 236-3310.

DATES TO



REMEMBER

Upcoming Holidays - State Offices Closed

January 17, 2005 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day Observed

February 21, 2005 - Presidents' Day Observed

Other Important Dates

March 31, 2005 - Harvester Licenses Expire

April 21-22, 2005 - HACCP Class Offered

Staff Contacts

Nancy Napolilli
Office Director (360) 236-3325

Bob Woolrich
Classification/WaterQuality (360) 236-3329

Jessie DeLoach
Licensing & Certification (360) 236-3302

Dave Gifford
Biotoxins (360) 236-3074

Other Numbers

General Information (360) 236-3330

FAX (360) 236-2257

Web address www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf

Biotoxin Closures

PSP Hotline (800) 562-5632

PSP Web www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm

PSP Maps www.doh.wa.gov/biotoxinmaps.htm



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